

Dear Education Committee,

I am writing to provide testimony in opposition to SB 1105. I have been working with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) for over 10 years. I am a doctoral level board certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D) and have worked in public schools, private schools, and with families in their homes.

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a science of behavior, not a simple set of procedures: It takes extensive coursework and applied experience to understand, implement, and supervise assessments and interventions based on ABA (e.g., BCBA certification requires over 1000-1500 hours using ABA in practical settings and at least 5 graduate level courses in ABA). ABA-focused coursework is not part of the training for other professionals working in schools; including school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, school administrators, and special educators. These professionals each fill essential roles and are key members of educational teams, but they are not trained in ABA. Just as a BCBA would not be qualified to supervise speech and language services, school psychology evaluations, or administrative activities, these professionals are not appropriate to supervise development and implementation of ABA-based services. On the other hand, if any of these professionals have sufficient training in ABA, they are already included in the current law.

The estimated lifetime cost of services for an individual with and ASD is \$3.2 million (Ganz, 2007). This cost can be much less with appropriate services: ABA-based services have consistently been found to be effective and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Institute of Mental Health. To effectively deliver ABA-based services, the services must be developed and overseen by professionals with appropriate training (e.g., a BCBA, BCBA-D, or professional having met requirements established by the behavior analyst certification board). If ABA-based educational and behavioral services are not designed and supervised by appropriate professionals, individuals with ASDs will likely not make similar progress.

Again, I oppose SB 1105, because it eliminates the requirement for design and supervision of specialized services by the only professionals qualified to design and supervise implementation of these services.

Respectfully yours,

Mark P. Groskreutz, PhD, BCBA-D

References

- Ganz, M. L. (2007). The lifetime distribution of the incremental society costs of autism. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 161, 343-349.